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April 22, 2014

The Honorable John Olszewski, Sr.
The Baltimore County Council
Old Courthouse – Second Floor
400 Washington Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204

Re: Application for Planned Unit Development
Conifer Realty, LLC - *Josenhans Village*
1517-1519 Old Eastern Avenue
Tax Map 97, Parcels 786 and 787
7th Councilmanic District, 15th Election District

Dear Councilman Olszewski:

In compliance with Section 32-4-242 of the Baltimore County Code (“BCC”), Conifer Realty, LLC (“Applicant” or “Conifer”) submits this application for a General Development Planned Unit Development (“PUD”) for a 3.1± acre site in Essex, Maryland, located at 1517-1519 Old Eastern Avenue. After reviewing the enclosed information, we hope that you will support the Applicant’s proposal and allow it to proceed through the PUD process.

I. DESCRIPTION OF PUD PROPOSAL:

The PUD site is located on the south side of Old Eastern Avenue, west of Back River Neck Road. The site is currently split-zoned ROA (Residential Office, Class A), CB (Community Business), BL-AS (Business, Local – Automotive Services District) and DR 5.5 (Density Residential, 5.5 dwelling units per acre). Consisting of two separate tax parcels (Tax Map 97, Parcels 786 and 787), the PUD site is currently improved with two single-family dwellings. These structures will be razed to allow for development of *Josenhans Village*, a 70 unit high-quality multifamily residential community, serving working individuals and families.

Conifer is a multistate real estate development and property management company specializing in multifamily communities. With over 40 years of experience in real estate, Conifer has successfully developed or acquired over 200 communities in five states, comprising over 15,000 housing units. Each of its communities reflects a commitment to quality design and construction, superior property management services, and quality of life for its residents. Conifer will draw on its vast experience to design, construct, and manage this new community.

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In keeping with the higher density residential and commercial fabric of its surrounding neighbors, *Josenhans Village*'s 70 units will be divided between two, four-story elevator buildings. The units will be a mix of 1, 2, and 3 bedroom units (36 two bedroom, 19 one bedroom, and 15 three bedroom). Each building will feature first floor covered parking with additional surface parking being provided. As reflected on the enclosed elevations, the buildings will feature high-quality, durable materials, such as cementitious siding and stone. Each residential building in the development will be Energy Star and National Green Building Standard certified, and thus, shall provide a direct benefit to residents' energy bills.

The project is designed to provide residents with a sense of privacy in a busy area of Essex while, at the same time, being sensitive to its existing neighbors. The residential buildings will be positioned along the community's internal boulevard to provide for walkability and a sense of community. A community center will be located at the entrance of the site and will provide a buffer from the busy street. This building will contain the community's amenities as well as house onsite management and maintenance operations. Community amenities available to residents will include a fitness center, furnished community room, TV lounge, computer lab, laundry facilities, and an outdoor playground. Residents will have access to 24-hour emergency maintenance should problems occur after office hours or on weekends.

The site is conveniently located in the downtown Essex commercial district and is in close proximity to schools, shopping, and public transportation. A portion of the property actually lies within the Essex Commercial Revitalization District. According to the *Master Plan 2020*, the Land Management Area map identifies the property as being a Community Conservation Area, which areas are generally "suitable for compact, mixed-use, walkable, transit oriented development." The *Master Plan*'s Proposed Land Use map designates the property as T-4 (General Urban) and T-5 (Urban Center), which both recommend multifamily housing within a mixed use setting.

Josenhans Village will have a positive effect on the surrounding area, taking an underutilized site and creating a new residential community with resulting upgrades. Conifer's proposed \$20 million investment will expand upon recent redevelopment projects in the close vicinity and build upon recent efforts to renew some of Essex's lost vitality and charm.

II. REQUIREMENTS FOR PUD APPLICATION:

BCC Section 32-4-242(b) specifically requires an applicant to describe the projected impacts of the PUD on the surrounding area, to define the proposed community benefit, and to demonstrate how the project will meet the compatibility objectives outlined in BCC Section 32-4-402. The following information will address those requirements.

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A. PROJECTED IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT:

When the County Council adopted its *Master Plan 2020*, it clearly identified the redevelopment of multifamily housing as a major component of the County's redevelopment strategy in older communities. *Master Plan 2020*, p. 16. This PUD proposal will result in wide-ranging benefits with no negative implications. In addition to providing a high-quality housing option to residents in an area generally seen as having old and poorly managed housing stock, *Josenhans Village* will reinforce and complement the public and private investment in the residential projects of Renaissance Square and Waterview and commercial investment within the Essex Commercial Revitalization District.

Water/Sewer: The property is served by public water and sewer. According to the 2013 Basic Services Maps, the site is not within a deficient area or area of special concern for either water or sewer. Therefore, the project will not have a negative impact on the County's water and sewer infrastructure.

Transportation/Roads: According to the 2013 Basic Services Maps, the site is not within a deficient area for transportation. The site is within easy walking distance to multiple routes offered by MTA. For this reason, there should be no negative impact on the transportation infrastructure.

Environmental: A wetland delineation and forest stand delineation have been conducted. There is no forest located on the property; however there are four specimen trees on-site in varying degrees of decline. A forest buffer extends slightly into the site generated from an off-site stream system. This system is generally characterized as an engineered reinforce channel, an extension of the storm drain system flowing under Old Eastern Avenue. Applicant will comply with current stormwater management standards, including environmental site design.

Schools: The property is served by Mars Estates Elementary School, Stemmers Run Middle School, and Kenwood High School in the 15th Election District. The pupil yield from 70 apartment units is seven elementary school students, four middle school students, and four high school students. None of the schools are considered to be an overcrowded school district as defined by Section 32-6-103 of the BCC. Applicant will be required to submit a school impact analysis at the appropriate time during the development approval process.

Other Public Facilities: The proposed development will not adversely impact the County's ability to provide police and fire services. Specifically, the site is served by the Essex Precinct for police and the Essex Fire Station Response Area. The Essex precinct is 0.84 miles west of

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the site, and the Essex Fire Station is 0.9 miles west. The buildings will meet all County and State Building and Fire Code Regulations.

B. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Proposed PUD Site Acreage:	3.1± (gross) acres
Existing Zoning:	ROA, CB, BL-AS, DR 5.5
Existing Use:	Residential
Proposed Use:	Residential
Permitted Density:	15.36 Density Units 11.77 Dwelling Units
Proposed Number of Units:	70 apartments (70 dwelling units/74 density units)
Required Number of Parking Spaces:	130 parking spaces
Proposed Number of Parking Spaces:	104 parking spaces

Applicant will request a modification of density for the proposed PUD to permit a total of 70 dwelling units/74 density units to be utilized on the property in lieu of the maximum density permitted under the Property's existing zoning classifications. Other modifications of standards may be requested with the Concept Plan submittal.

C. COMMUNITY BENEFIT

BCC Section 32-4-242(b)(6) requires that an applicant state how the planned unit development will provide a community benefit. Applicant proposes a capital improvement benefit, pursuant to Section 32-4-242(b)(6)(iii), to enhance the existing bus stop across from the site along Old Eastern Avenue. The bus stop sees a high volume of ridership and will benefit from a new bus shelter, trash receptacles, and general beautification and maintenance. In addition to making the improvements, Applicant will commit to ongoing maintenance of the bus shelter, including removing the trash and cleaning other debris left in and around the bus shelter. By improving and maintaining the bus shelter, Applicant will promote community residents' use of public transit.

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D. COMPATIBILITY

Pursuant to BCC Section 32-4-242(b)(5), an application for a PUD must include a statement of how the development will comply with the compatibility objectives of Section 32-4-402 of the BCC. In addressing the compatibility objectives, the development must be judged in relation to the “neighborhood.” Section 32-4-402(a) defines “neighborhood” to include existing buildings adjacent to and extending from the proposed development to a definable boundary, such as a primary collector or arterial street, an area with a significant change in character or land use, or a major natural feature. Applying this definition, the surrounding neighborhood would be from Southeast Boulevard to the west, Eastern Boulevard to the north, Middleborough Road to the south, and the DR.16 and business zoned properties along Stemmers Run Road to the east.

The defined neighborhood includes a mix of residential uses (multifamily, rowhomes, and single-family homes), institutional uses (St. Stephen A.M.E. Church and Academy, Mars Estates Elementary School), recreational opportunities (Stembridge Community Center and Fields at Renaissance Park) and a variety of individual commercial uses and strip centers along the Back River Neck Road corridor. Much of this area is within the Essex Commercial Revitalization District.

Compatibility Objectives:

- 1. The arrangement and orientation of the proposed buildings and site improvements are patterned in a similar manner to those in the neighborhood.**

The existing neighborhood and the larger surrounding area contain an eclectic mix of uses: retail, commercial, institutional, and residential of varying styles with no unifying theme. Many buildings have been repurposed with little attention being paid to design. Parcels that have been developed were designed with a primary focus on vehicular access.

However, revitalization has begun in the area with projects like Evergreen at Renaissance and Renaissance Square (currently under construction) and the recently completed Pizza John’s Restaurant. Each has attempted to establish a relationship between building facades, pedestrian connectivity, and access to parking facilities. The projects have begun to define the community with landscaping, lighting, and site furniture.

Josenhans Village will have building façades open towards Old Eastern Avenue, providing a welcoming connection to the street. Parking will extend into the site, away from the public street. The scale of the buildings is designed to be consistent with the scale of the recently

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constructed residential buildings of Evergreen at Renaissance Square. The façades will further define the streetscape. The site will also incorporate landscaping and pedestrian walkways. These features are designed to provide a pedestrian friendly sense of place and connect to the Essex Revitalization Area.

- 2. The building and parking lot layouts reinforce existing building and streetscape patterns assure that the placement of buildings and parking lots have no adverse impact on the neighborhood.**

The design of *Josenhans Village* attempts to improve upon existing building and parking lot layout patterns. Building façades and landscape treatment are oriented along Old Eastern Avenue to reinforce the streetscape, and parking extends into the site and away from the public street. Lighting and street furniture will also be used to create an attractive and pleasing environment.

- 3. The proposed streets are connected with the existing neighborhood road network wherever possible and the proposed sidewalks are located to support the functional patterns of the neighborhood.**

This development would not result in any changes to the existing street system. The existing pedestrian routes associated with Old Eastern Avenue will remain in place. Proposed walkways within the site will strengthen the connection for future residents to existing retail and transportation opportunities located within the neighborhood.

- 4. The open spaces of the proposed development reinforce the open space patterns of the neighborhood in form and siting and complement existing open space systems.**

The residences will be oriented towards a central courtyard, defined with pedestrian walkways, landscaping, street lighting, and seating areas. A tot-lot is proposed in conjunction with the community center serving the residents of *Josenhans Village*.

Neighborhood recreational opportunities are also available at the adjacent Mars Estates Elementary School and Mars Estates Recreation and Parks Police Athletic League (PAL) Center. These facilities contain multiple tot lots, ball fields, and basketball courts as well as various indoor programs available at the Mars Estates PAL Center. An existing pedestrian connection is conveniently located just south of Old Eastern along Back River Road via a macadam pathway, identified by a brick wall with stone columns, leading to the school. The Fields at Renaissance Park and Stembridge Community Center are located at the northern edge of the neighborhood.

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These facilities contain ball fields, picnic pavilions and open park land. This park will also be accessible via the existing sidewalk system.

5. Locally significant features of the site such as distinctive buildings or vistas are integrated into the site design.

The topography of the site is relatively level, thereby encouraging the site redevelopment to gently blend into the existing landscape more readily than other typical in-fill redevelopment projects.

6. The proposed landscape design complements the neighborhood's landscape patterns and reinforces its functional qualities.

The overall established neighborhood lacks a specific landscape theme. Together with Evergreen at Renaissance Square and other recent projects within the Essex Commercial Revitalization Area, *Josenhans Village* will set a tone by creating a strong streetscape along the existing public roads. Benches, sidewalks, and other amenities will provide a pedestrian friendly design. Landscaping will be incorporated within the site and visual screening provided where appropriate.

7. The exterior signs, site lighting, and accessory structures support a uniform architectural theme and present a harmonious visual relationship with the surrounding neighborhood.

Signage and lighting, together with the architectural design, will provide a uniform and pleasing architectural theme. In order to present a harmonious visual relationship with the neighborhood, Applicant proposes that the entrance sign will be low ground mounted and externally lighted and onsite lighting will be of a scale and style to support the character of the development. Outdoor furniture, including benches and trash receptacles, will be incorporated into the streetscapes as appropriate.

8. The scale, proportions, massing, and detailing of the proposed buildings are in proportion to those existing in the neighborhood.

Evergreen at Renaissance Square has established scale, proportions, massing and detailing for future residential redevelopment within the neighborhood. The proposed buildings within *Josenhans Village* are in keeping with that of Renaissance Square.

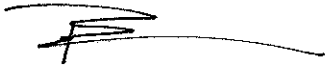
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Once you have had an opportunity to review the application, conceptual site plan, and elevation, and to consider Baltimore County agency and community comments, we hope that you will support Applicant's request for a General Development PUD for the *Josenhans Village* project.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'PAM', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Patricia A. Malone

PAM/jaw

Enclosures

cc: Jessica D. Zuniga